

2. Barbro Karlén und Anne Frank

- BK = Barbro Karlén
I = Interviewerin
(...) = Auslassungen im Text
... = Pause im Gespräch
[] = Ergänzungen des Herausgebers

*I don't have any desire to convince
anyone that I really was Anne Frank*

Barbro Karlén

I: (...) Thanks for being here, Barbro!

BK: Thank you!

I: When did you ever have the idea that you could have been Anne Frank?

BK: Well, when I was about two years old, I don't remember it myself, of course, my mother told me that I kept saying to her that my name is not Barbro, it's Anne ... And of course she was very confused. And after a time she thought, maybe I had a phantasy-friend, that I called Anne. And after some years, actually, she took me to a psychiatrist, to, to ask ...

I: Because of what? (...)

BK: Because I seemed to live in a different time and a different world, and I always commented on things that I had done «earlier», and my mother knew that I was so young that I could not have had that experience.

I: Yes ... You were seventeen or something like that when you read Anne Frank's diary?

BK: Yes, I was about seventeen [1971].

I: But so you didn't know anything about her?

BK: Well, when I was about ten years old [1964] we went to Amsterdam.⁴ My parents took me there, and we went to Paris and Brussels and everywhere, but also to Amsterdam, and, well, my father said

that he wanted to see Anne Frank's House. He didn't know anything about it ... about me.

I: Swedish people in the centre of Amsterdam.

BK: Yes, and then, then I suddenly knew where to go, and I have said so to my parents: I can, we can go there, it's not far away from here. And they were surprised, of course, because I knew that. And we went out on the street, and I showed the way and it was quite natural. I know the way to the house.

I: You were ten years old?

BK: Yes.

I: You knew (...) the way to the Anne Frank House?

BK: Yes, I did ...

I: I know, because I know your story that you noticed the difference. The stairs of the house, there was a special stairs outside, what was it?

BK: Yes, it was something that I didn't recognize. So I said to my mother, mostly, because I was most close to her, and I said to her: it didn't look that way last time I was here, and I saw pictures on the walls in «the room». And I said: look at these pictures, because I saw these movie stars. And (...) my mother didn't see them, because it wasn't there at the time [of the visit]. And it was some other things that I pointed out for her and that I felt it was different from when I was there, before. And I had a very bad feeling, when I was there, and wanted to get out.

I: Yes, that is what I wanted to ask you.

BK: Yes, I wanted to get out and I think I was there for just about ten minutes or something, because I felt so ... terrible.

I: Yes.

BK: I had a feeling I couldn't get out from there. So, after about ten minutes we left. And I was, I remember, I was very upset afterwards.



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Barbro Karlén

I: Yes, you couldn't stay there for a long time.

BK: No.

I: You were very upset. But what did your parents say about that?

BK: Well, my father was very upset about it, because he didn't believe anything about God or reincarnation or anything like that. But after this happened he said, well, I must admit that you have had a previous life as Anne Frank, because I'm convinced about it.

I: Yes.

BK: But he didn't think anyone else had a previous life! [Laughs] So, and my mother, she wanted to believe in reincarnation and nowadays, of course, she does.

I: She believes?

BK: Yes ...

I: Let's talk about your childhood. Because I asked you, Mariam [= andere Teilnehmerin der Sendung. Einige Sätze auf holländisch über das Aussehen von Anne Frank und Barbro Karlén anhand von vorgelegten Kinderphotos] (...) You know, we are talking about the fact that you, you are looking like, like Anne Frank.

BK: Yes.

I: And especially in childhood ... But you were an unhappy child ... Not really?

BK: No, because I lived in two ... two worlds. I had

memories, as I have now as an adult I have memories from my childhood, and when I was a child I had memories from my childhood as well.

I: Because, it was a split personality.

BK: Yes (...)

I: When did that change? When did you become really Barbro?

BK: About fifteen years old. It faded away, the memories faded away more and more (...)

Nowadays I don't remember more than that I remember that I have remembered, so to speak ... I can have some feelings, when I see pictures and from people who lived in the house, and when I talk about it. But I don't really remember as I did when I was a young child.

I: Has it changed your life? I mean, does it have any influence on you?

BK: I don't think so ... Maybe my choice of profession in a way, because when I was a child I was terrified by uniforms ... People in uniforms just scared ... me ... very much. And that was a problem for me, when I grew up even. And ... I don't know but maybe to get over it I choose the profession when I took a uniform on myself, because I'm a police-officer today [1995]. And that was a way to handle the problem.

I: Aha.

BK: And I got over it.

I: Could you explain to me, why you're telling me or why you're telling us this story? It's not only because we asked you?

BK: No. I really don't know. It surprised me very much. I surprised myself when you called me and you asked me if I wanted to come and tell my story. Because in Sweden many journalists have asked me ... many years ... And I have always refused it. Because from the beginning it was more or less – it was not meant to come out in the public. It was a friend of mine, it was a journalist – she talked about reincarnation and so on, because I write about it in my books. And then I told her that I had memories from this life, the Anne Frank life, and she told another friend and another friend, and suddenly it was out in the open [1973]³, and everyone wanted me to ... talk about it and tell them ... And I refused because I don't have any desire to convince anyone that I really was Anne Frank. It's not important. Because I knew.

I: Yes, you knew ... Thank you very much for telling me the story.

BK: Thank you.